MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

september 1986

still 1.00

⅃ℐ Atari News

ICD is now making SPARTADOS in a CARTRIDGE for the 8-bit ATARI. No more disk space gone to DOS, or load time wasted! It will be a STACKABLE cart like their RT8 time cart... Imagine SPARTDOS, RT8, and BASIC XE, all stacked up on top of an upgraded XL... You might have to move your monitor!

Closer to home, MICHIGAN COMPUTER SHOWS has announced another COMPUTER SHOW in the CLARION HOTEL in Lansing for Sunday, October 19. Area clubs and vendors from several states will be there, with over 15,000 square feet of show area. Discount tickets are available for club pre-ticket sales. Call (517) 487-5646.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY's Computer Lab is also hosting a MICROS UNLIMITED computer show (no sales) at the MSU Union Building on the 7th and 8th of November. The purpose of the show is to increase awareness of the potential and uses of computers. (517) 353-1800.

A text reader for use with almost any computer is now under $200. OMNI-READER plugs into any RS-232 port and can optically scan printed text and deliver a file readable by word processors. It can cope with fuzzy photocopies and several typestyles. Originally marketed at over $800! (LET US KNOW IF ANYONE TRIES ONE, WE COULD USE ONE FOR THE NEWSLETTER! ED.) OMNI-READER, 1-800-722-6013.

Thanks, DAN POORMAN (LANSING STATE JOURNAL computer columnist), for the kind words about MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE. Many ATARI newsletters around the country have reprinted a number of our feature articles. And you ain't seen nothin' yet!

FUTURE SYSTEMS (now owners of defunct INDUS) is now selling te long promised RAMCHARGER upgrade for the INDUS disk drives. For $99 you get 64K in side your drive, with a Z-80 CPM computer in it. Your ATARI operating system plays dumb terminal to it. You can run IBM programs on your 8-bit! FUTURE SYSTEMS, (818) 407-1647.

Two California teens are suing ATARI Games Corp. for a MILLION DOLLARS in damages for a "stolen" game concept. Two boys, 14 and 16 years old, claim they sent detailed descriptions of a newspaper-delivery game to ATARI only to have it returned with a letter saying "NOT INTERESTED". Later, after spotting a new game at the arcade called "PAPERBOY" that was so close to their idea, they talked to a lawyer.

OSS Inc. (makers of BASIC XE, the WRITERS TOOL, DOSXL, and other fine products for the ATARI) is again trying their hand at a quarterly newsletter. Last time, it was free and came out ONCE. This time, it will be on a two-sided disk, will include hints and actual programs for use with ACTION!, BASIC XL and XE, etc. This time it will also cost $25 a year (4 issues). Contact OSS, 1121-B Kentwood Avenue, San Jose, CA, 95129-9884.

MEMORY UPGRADES are everywhere now... but who expected one in a CARTRIDGE? RAMCART is a new product of CANOE COMPUTER SERVICES in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Available in 256K, 512K, and ONE MEG, it's a CARTRIDGE for the 8-bit ATARI, and boasts of being the ONLY upgrade that works on ANY machine including the 400 and 600XL. NO INSTALLATION, and full portability from machine to machine. High claims, even for the $150, $200, and $300 CANOE gets for the three models. We hope to have one for a review shortly. CANOE: (403)486-0166.

ST 3-D GRAPHICS ($24.95) may be the only book available that teaches three dimensional computer-aided-design in C language for the ST, describing such techniques as rotation and shading. Abacus Software, 2201 Kalamazoo SE, PO Box 7211, (616) 241-5510

Make your artwork come to life with MAKE IT MOVE. This $49.95 graphic presentation program is compatible with all popular ST paint programs, creates titles and animation sequences for video recordings, and busiess presentation graphics utilizng zooms, fades, rotations and moving fonts. Avila Associates, 3646 Baker Lane, Lafayette, CA 95459 (415) 284-5982

Subscriptions to the Mid-Michigan Atari
Magazine are $12.00 per year to addresses in
the U.S. Use the address below for
subscriptions and inquiries.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions from members are encouraged. If
possible, please make your submissions by
electronic means. Submissions are accepted on
the C.H.A.O.S. BBS, or on disk-by mail or by
giving a disk to an Editor. All submissions
must be received by the 20th to be considered
for the next month's issue.

NOTES TO OTHER CLUBS

Please be certain that you are mailing to the
correct address (see below) and NOT to the
return mail address. Exchanges of both
newsletters and disk libraries are welcomed.
Exchange newsletters and terms for disk library
exchange should be sent to:

        C.H.A.O.S.
        Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine
        PO Box 16132
        Lansing, MI 48901

We are also soliciting other Michigan Atari
clubs for affiliation with the Mid-Michigan
Atari Magazine. We can offer MORE total pages
and LOWER production costs per copy, with no
loss in your local input. Contact C.H.A.O.S.
for more information.

Editor's Note

Editor's Notes
by Jeff Bone

This issue marks the beginning of a great
co-operative effort among ATARI CLUBS in
Michigan. We welcome the GENESEE ATARI GROUP
(G.A.G.) to the MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE.
We expect to add more clubs and more readers in
the coming months. The JACKSON Club, C.A.C.E.,
may be the next to join us next month!

Once again, this month's issue is packed with
the latest and best articles on our favorite
computer. Every attempt is made to make sure
you've got the newest scoop in the Atari world.
Thanks to this month's contributors...

NOTICE TO OTHER CLUBS: Many of the articles
included in this and every issue of the
MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE are available on
DL7 of the ATARI SIG on COMPUSERVE. Get them
there for reprinting in your publications!
Also, please upload your feature article to the
DL7, to share with us and others. REMEMBER,
UPLOAD TIME IS NOW FREE ON COMPUSERVE.

YES! It's true that there is hope for getting
the latest software for the Atari here in
Lansing. Recently, while my wife was
squandering my paycheck at Sears, I decided to
check out their electronic department to see if
they had any old software. I had visions of of
finding long forgotten adventure games in the
bargain bin for $1.98. That was hardly the
case. What I found was a decent selection of
current titles! Of course, the selection was
small but very respectable.

I discovered two games I already own on the
shelves. They are "Silent Service" and "F-15
Strike Eagle" both by Microprose. I had
purchased both of these games last fall. The
difference was that the games at Sears could
function on either the Atari or Commodore. So,
these games had been repackaged for greater
marketability. And this is not the first game
company to do so.

I've also recently noticed that there many new
releases that appear in the Atari language
first. This to me is a sign that there is
still faith in the Atari machine. A lot of old
titles are being converted too. Could the
Atari machine actually be getting some respect?
Nah...

Till next time, may all your sub-routines
return...

CAPITOL HILL
ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

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We are the CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY
(otherwise known as CHAOS), serving the ATARI
owners of the LANSING area. The CAMPUS HILL
ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY is the Michigan State
Unversity chapter of our organization.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues are $12.00 per year and entitle
the member to a 1 year subscription to the
Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from
our regular library, access to our other
libraries and facilities as well as access to
our other resources.

Dues may be paid at any regular C.H.A.O.S.
meeting or by mail. If not using an official
Membership Application, please include your
Name, Address, Phone and a list of your
equipment and interests.

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

Sysop John Nagy and C.H.A.O.S. invite you to
call one of the country's finest BBS's at:
(517) 371-1106

INQUIRIES

Inquiries regarding C.H.A.O.S., mail orders,
memberships and etc, should be sent to:

C.H.A.O.S.
PO Box 16132
Lansing, MI 48901

MEETINGS

Meetings take place on the 2nd and 3rd
Saturdays of each month, room 118
Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road,
Michigan State University. Meetings begin at
10:00 AM sharp and last until about 1:00 PM.
S.T.IN.G. (S.T. INterest Group), for Atari ST
owners, meets on the SECOND Saturday of each
month. The GENERAL MEETING, for 8-bit Atari
owners, takes place on the THIRD Saturday of
each month.

PIRACY

Illegal copying and violation of copyright laws
are not condoned by C.H.A.O.S. in any way, nor
are these activities allowed at any club
sponsored function, nor allowed on the club
BBS.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER
By Leo Sell

School has started. Summer is over. Time to
renew interest in the ol' Atari!

There are two very important activities coming
up in a month or so. One, at the October
meeting, is the annual C.H.A.O.S. Auction. As
always, you can bring hardware, software
(original only please) and etc, and sell it at
auction. C.H.A.O.S. receives a 10 percent
commission on consigned. We also welcome the
donation of items to the Club to be sold for
Club fund-raising.

The other event is the Fall computer show. It
will be much the same as the show last spring
with loads of excitement, bargains, and money
saving (spending?) opportunities. The show is
scheduled for October 19 and we intend to be
there and get the Atari message out. But we
need volunteers. People are needed to
coordinate our involvement before and during
the show, as well as to help with the
C.H.A.O.S. tables at the show. Volunteer!!

Some of you may wonder why we emphasize Club
money-making so much. Quite frankly, it takes
a fair sum to do the kinds of things we now do.
The new Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine, exists
only because we had the liquid funds to start
it up. Our BBS is one of the nation's best.
Our library is greatly expanding. All of these
things take money as well as time. Besides,
the treasury never quite gets large enough to
send me and my wife to Hawaii!! Aloha...

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF C.H.A.O.S.

Position	Name	Phone #
President	Leo Sell	393-7792
Vice President	John Nagy	487-5646
Sec'y-Treasurer	Gary Ferris	393-2593
8-bit Rep.	Adam Slonim	485-7348
16-bit Rep.	Barry Schroeder	627-6708
Membership Coord.	Gary Ferris	393-2593
Library Manager	John Baker	641-4430
Asst. Librarian	Malcolm Cleveland	485-6743
Asst. Librarian	Sally Nagy	484-1976
Publ. Librarian	Richard Evans	351-2381
Program Coord.	Guy Hurt	484-7675
ST SIG Coord.	Brian Goluska	332-4415
BBS System Op.	John Nagy	487-5646
BBS Librarian	John Baker	641-4430
Newsletter Editor	Jeff Bone	321-5510

C.H.A.O.S. AUGUST 8-BIT MINUTES
By Gary Ferris, Secretary/Treasurer

The 39 person turnout for the August meeting was exceptional considering that it is historically the smallest of the year by far.

The meeting started with a discussion about the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine and the possibility of other clubs associating with us in the magazine. This would enable us to provide more features and help in gaining the attention of Atari and Atari related companies.

Also discussed was the piracy problem and possible solutions. It was stressed that piracy cannot be condoned by the club.

Sally Nagy demoed several of the library utility disks including a Print Shop picture disk and one to convert pictures between the different formats.

Leo Sell demoed the new Alladin 'magazine on a disk' which has some impressive graphics that few thought possible on the 8-bit machines.

John Nagy put together another topnotch Disk of the Month (which we've all come to expect). DOM subscribers will receive the first of two bonus disks next month. Subscriptions are $50 per year and get you the 12 monthly disks plus two bonus disks.

The balance in the treasury stands at $821.10.

AUGUST ST-UTTERINGS
by Brian Goluska

The ST special interest group of CHAOS meets the second Saturday of each month. You don't need to own an ST to attend. In fact, at the August ST SIG meeting there were more people who were thinking about getting ST's than ST owners.

Following up on topics from last meeting, Peter Miller reported that his upgrade of his ST to 1 Meg was working. He said it took more than one try. Besides going over the instructions vs. the finished work again, he said that he found THREE of the piggyback solder joints that looked good but weren't before he was done.

I've been in that spot before, when everything should work and it doesn't, then you find each of several problems ONE AT A TIME until you're done. Congratulations to Peter for persevering (and getting an inexpensive upgrade).

Also, in last month's article, I was discouraged with Time Bandit, after giving it a good review earlier (Time Bandit, from MICHTRON, advertised around $40). Mike Clewley, who had also experienced the problem, had further information. He said that in "older ST's", the keyboard processor generates extra interrupts when the joysticks are being used, and if the random value happens to be a "Q", Time Bandit take a "Quit" branch. The old disk and a $5 replacement charge will get us a version of Time Bandit which will work better even on "old" ST's. (Author's note: I've got the oldest ST in town, 13 months. I guess I better get a "new" one).

Another discussion, important to someone considering an ST, is what software might be included in the purchase. This has been confused, since different software disks have been shipped at different times. The most recent purchase anyone knew of included NEOCHROME and 1ST WORD, as well as BASIC and LOGO. Some software products that were previously shipped with an ST, such as DB Master One and ST-TALK, must now be purchased separately. Keep in mind that when Atari shipped software 'free' with certain ST's, this did NOT make the item public domain.

Other things looked at during the August meeting were many new .PIC files for SLIDESHOW viewing, including an interesting animated wave/beach scene, and also CAD 3D from ANTIC. It was generally a low-key meeting, typical of the August lull in activity.

A few days after the meeting, Che Goluska called with news that his new 520 ST had just arrived. He was very pleased that it had the RF (TV) output - it really exists! Che said that low res mode looked pretty good. Medium res mode was not as good, the lack of the TV's capabilities especially evident with a screen full of text. With his ST came 1ST WORD, NEOCHROME, BASIC and LOGO. 1040's are apparently still scarce. Che said that when he was calling for 520 prices, no mail-order place he called had a 1040 in stock/ready to ship.

Like last month, I'll end this with something simple I learned at the meeting. If you change the palette colors, say from BASIC, you don't have to boot the system to return to default colors (black, white, red, green). The CONTROL PANEL desk accessory will reset the default

colors. So if you have software that leaves
the screen colors in an undesirable state, just
invoke the CONTROL PANEL to return to a
readable state.

More ST-ATEMENTS next month.

Disk Library

THE LIBRARY TABLE
By John Baker

FREE!!!! There is something about that simple
word that causes normal sensible people to lose
all contact with reality. End cost for
products or services becomes oblivious after
the realization sinks in that you are going to
get something "free". WOW!!! The fact that you
bought two stretch limos and a condo in L.A. is
immaterial when measured against the knowledge
that by making those purchases you got a "FREE"
bonus gift.

So with those thoughts in mind, I feel it my
duty to inform you that we too are offering
free items. Get a grip on yourself! I didn't
mean to spring that news on you with so little
warning. That's better. Calm down. I
guarantee though, that the free items we offer
will be much less painful than you might be
used to.

Our library disks are filled with quality
programs, tested and supplied with
documentation. A great buy at $5.00 per disk.
But now, to acquaint you with the NEW
C.H.A.O.S. library, and the even newer
additions, we are giving you a free disk of
your choice with the purchase of 4 disks. You
also receive a free disk by merely renewing
your C.H.A.O.S. membership.

We now have 20 new disks that are not shown on
the current library listing. Five of these
disks are "PIC" file disks with graphic Koala
Pad pictures. Seven are new games disks.
Disks in the Utility and Education sections
round out the new arrivals. There is so much
new stuff that surely you will find programs to
pique your interest.

New items are continually added to the library
and trades with other users groups are bringing
us a wealth of fresh material. Don't miss out.
Keep current on whats available to you as a
member, and use it to your advantage.

Mail orders for library disks are encouraged.
No need to wait for the monthly meeting to pick
up those disks you need. Make your checks or
money orders out to C.H.A.O.S., include $1.00
for postage for every five disks ordered, and
mail with your order directly to me for fastest
service.

A LETTER TO THE TAKERS
by Leo Sell

Dear Takers,

This is a difficult letter to write. The
sentiments herein could be taken in a negative
way - please don't. Please take this as an
opportunity for constructive change and a
chance to examine your motivation for being
involved in our club.

A club such as ours is based on mutual help and
sharing of knowledge, experience and resources.
Anyone whose involvement is only taking, who
doesn't contribute in some way, is tearing at
the very fabric of our organization.

An illustration is the difference between
2-wheel drive and 4-wheel drive vehicles. When
a 4 wheeler is operating, all 4 wheels are
contributing and sharing the road operation.
In contrast, when a 2 wheel vehicle operates, 2
wheels are powered and 2 wheels are a drag on
the power. The drag isn't much, but it is
enough that the 4-wheeler can handle a far
greater range of road conditions than the
2-wheeler.

How then are some people a drag on the club?
Well, how many times have you seen a
demonstration of a library disk, or the disk of
the month, and passed up the opportunity to
purchase it - instead, asking for and
downloading the files from the BBS? How many
times have you taken promotional material at a
Computer Show or Faire, and not helped with the
club's participation? Actions such as these,
as well as others, do nothing to support or
build up the club. Rather, they serve to
weaken it. If everyone takes, rather than
gives, the club's existance will cease.

Members must contribute more to the club than
just the yearly dues. The annual dues
basically cover the cost of the monthly
newsletter and the free disk. Support comes in
such things as the purchase of library disks,
purchase of club-offered hardware, volunteering
for needed jobs, etc. Members who are active
on the BBS can contribute by downloading
public-domain programs from commercial services

such as Compuserve and Delphi, and from other, long-distance Bulletin Board Systems, and then uploading the programs to our BBS to share with everyone. By doing this, the time and cost of expanding and updating our library and supporting the BBS is spread around.

To reitierate, the club must be a mutual and cooperative effort. If it is not, the club will die.

Now, one reaction at this point might be "what do I get out of it??". I will make you a guarantee. Most Atari users want to know more about their machines and how to use them. Getting involved in club activities, such as production of the newsletter, or helping with the libraries, or almost anything, will result in more knowledge and computing ability than you are likely to get in any other way. You always get more out of something when you put something in. You will with our club as well. I guarantee it!!

Please give thought to your involvement in the club. Are you a giver or a taker? We certainly hope that, regardless of past habits, you will share your time and talents and be a giver, not a only a taker. We look forward to your future help, support and cooperation.

Sincerely,
Leo Sell, President
C.H.A.O.S.

Telecom

THE CHAOS DOWNLOAD
By John Nagy

Funny thing... the more space we make on the CHAOS BBS, the more we need.

We doubled the disk space a few months back when SPARTADOS allowed us to use double sided disks with the PERCOM MASTER driving two slaves. Then , last month we upgraded a 130XE to 320K for more ramdisk room, adding another 1,000 sectors or so.

And here we are, full again. We continue to carry EVERY AVAILABLE file for the memory upgrades, and that continues to bring us LOTS of national calls. We have a FEATURE each month, where we concentrate on one catagory of file (SEPTEMBER is UTILITIES month). But the more room we have, the more it seems we need to bring you the best programs for your ATARI.

The moral is, I guess, that you need to USE the CHAOS BBS regularly to be sure to get the most out of it. Users regularly find answers to their questions about almost anything ATARI-related through messages on the many bases. And many more users find a lot of good conversation of a NON-COMPUTING nature in the SIGHTS & SOUNDS base, the trivia base, the free UNCLASSIFIED ADS, and the general messages.

You can too... If you have a MODEM, call often! If not, visit a friend and try it. The cost of a modem today can be as low as $20 used and need not cost more than $40 new for a XM-301. It's a very low addmission price to a whole new way of using your ATARI.

HERE'S A FEW HINTS for using the CHAOS BBS. First, don't be discouraged if you get a busy signal! It happens all the time, and is a healthy sign. Put your sytem into auto-redial mode, and wait for IT to call YOU when it gets through. Evenings from 8-midnight are especially busy... all except for TUESDAY NIGHT. I don't understand it, but you can be usually assured a clear shot on any Tuesday. It's the unofficial BBS'ers night off, I guess. Other GOOD times to get through are weekend mid-days, and anytime (except the noon hour) between 10 AM and 5 PM weekdays.

Once you are on, try STACKING commands to save time and eliminate menus you don't need. For instance, if you wanted to get to base #3 and read any new messages that came in since your last call, you COULD press "?" to get the main menu, then choose "M" for message bases menu, then select "3" for the CHAOS LIBRARY, then press "R" for READ MESSAGES at the prompt, then choose "N" for new messages at the next prompt... and finally see the new messages there. OR, a simple "M;3;N" at the main SELECT: prompt would get you to the same place almost instantly! Try different "STACKS" to see what works and what doesn't.

Another point: you stay "in" a message base until and unless you SELECT A DIFFERENT ONE. No need to keep doing "M;3" over and over, just a "E" from the main SELECT gets you into ENTER MESSAGE in the same base you last used. Same to "R"ead messages. Don't bother re-selecting a base until you want a DIFFERENT one. All calls start off "in" base 1, GENERAL MESSAGES. If you don't select any base, thats where you start and end up.

The best help of all is right on-line. Download (or DISPLAY online) the file called "XPRTUSER" for more details on zipping around like a PRO. The CHAOS BBS is available 24 hours a day at (517) 371-1106. C.H.A.O.S. members get higher access.

GENEJEE ATARI GROUP

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        Genesee Atari Group
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Jim Steele     President
Gil Merciez    Vice President (ST)
               & ST Disk Librarian
Matt Howe      Vice President (8 bit)
Jerry Cross    Disk Librarian (8 bit)
Jim Tuma       Disk Librarian (8 bit)

Genesee Atari Group   c/o Jim Steele
4711 Drummond Square, Flint MI 48504
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Presidential Mumblings for September '86
by Jim Steele, Genesee Atari Group

I'd like to welcome the members of the Genesee Atari Group to the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine. As I said last time, we've decided to join with CHAOS in producing a quality newsletter for the groups in the area. This new format will still let us bring you the local group news, and give you the chance to see what other groups are up to. It also will save us some money by taking advantage of bulk rates and advertising. Let's give it a chance and see how it works.

To the other groups out there, let me take this opportunity to introduce ourselves. The Genesee Atari Group is based in Flint, Michigan and has about 100 members in the Genesee county area. We've been around for about 3 years now.

G.A.G. meets on the second Wednesday of the month (except August) at the Neithercut()hool, 2010 Crestbrook Dr., Flint. Meetings begin at 6:30pm. We also have a 9:30am 4th Saturday bull session during the school year. If any of you from the other groups are in the area feel free to drop in on the meetings and introduce yourself.

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"A meeting is an affair where the minutes are kept and the hours are lost"

At the July meeting we were treated to a demo of Gil's new CASIO CZ101 synthesiser. Very impressive. Jerry Cross demoed the new Aladdin disk magazine. Personally, I think it's interesting but not a very good value. Lastly, I gave a demo of Atari's new STAR RAIDERS II while Matt Howe showed a little of PLANETARIUM.

In the business area, we decided to participate in the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine. We also decided to auction of a software package at the meetings. A few titles were suggested. I'll be following up on this starting in October.

COMMING UP NEXT:

Remember that the officers election is comming up in October. Let's all turn out and vote. As soon as I can get it ready, I'm preparing a membership survey. Every now and then we need to see how well we're doing. When it arrives please take the time to fill it out and send it back or bring it to the meeting.

See you at the meeting. -Jim

Telecom

JERRY'S PLACE
By Jerry Cross

Clothing....Cocktail Bars....Coffee....

Oh, Hello there. I'm just looking through the phone book. I need help.

You see, Jim asked me to write something about myself for the benefit of the new readers we will have in the new newsletter. I didn't want to, but then he said if I write something I could use my modem and upload it to Johns BBS. OOOOHHHH, I couldn't resist. But after pondering it for awhile, I now realize I'm a modem addict.

Coin Dealers....Compressers....

It all started that day I was smoking in the school's restroom. This nerd named "Tod" walked in and wanted to show me something. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small modem. He said it wasn't dangerous, so we snuck into the computer room and fired it up. Wow! I ran right out and got one. After a while I needed something more powerfull, so I got a 1200 baud modem. That's when I realized my goal in life was to become a disk librarian. That way I could justify my $100 a month modem habit.

I have been the librarian of the Genesee Atari Group for one year now. I enjoy it very much, and plan to continue to put out the best of the public domain programs I can find. I want to thank the officers of CHAOS for sharing their library with me. We did a lot of disk swapping and I came across lots of great programs I plan to offer to our club in the near future.

Concrete.....Contractors, oops, too far...

But this problem with modems needs some attention. I was going to install one of those new radio phones in my car, like my friend "Tod". He had his computer hooked up in his car, but I found out he had his license revoked for driving under the influence of modems. I didn't want that to happen to me.

I have been very interested in telecommunications for a few years now. I have played with several different modems, and dozens of terminal and BBS programs. I now run a BBS with a 10-meg hard drive. Please feel free to use it. The number is 313-736-3920. This BBS features lots of text files and over 700 public domain programs.

Now I see they have out these new modems that are even more powerfull and work much faster than anything I have used before. If I don't get help soon I'll be hooked to those 2400's in no time.

Ah, here it is, National Computer Clinic. Maybe they can help me......

Anyway, I think this new magazine will be a big success, even with this article in it. Good luck to everyone and lets make this one of the most popular newsletters in the country!

ST

ST NEWS FOR FLINT
by Gil Merciez

Forty seven character columns!!! Can I live with this? Only time will tell as the great experiment begins.

Has GAG lost it's identity, crammed into 4 pages and buried within an alien publication? We think not.

Will Jim Steele's mindless mutterings be muted? Will Matt Howe's spaghetti coded tutorials and etch-a-sketched diagrams cease to befuddle unwary tyro programmers? Will Jerry Cross meet an untimely fate buried under a mountain of disks after tripping over a modem cable? Will someone discover a cork large enough to stop my senseless ramblings? Unfortunately for many, these assaults on your senses will continue.

Additionally, you now are faced with wading through the ponderous musings of Leo Sell, John Nagy, Brian Galuska, and other brave Atarians from CHAOS. And, as I understand, the Jackson Atari group (whatever their name is) will soon be joining this venture to the outer limits of the lunatic fringe.

This should provide a strange introduction of sorts to those unfamiliar with the Genesee Atari Group and their demented spokesmen. I've been impressed with the first couple issues of this magazine and am confident that we here in Flint will benefit greatly from the additional local input that we now have available without sacrificing the national coverage that we have grown used to.

My ST Corner column will resume in October and will concentrate on comments on software, hardware, rumors, and anything else that pops up that might possibly be of interest to the general ST readership. I will also be writing a local column with emphasis on the items that pertain to GAG ST members such as the disk library, upcoming demos, and meetings.

For those who are unfamiliar with me, I have been writing a column of one type or another for the GAG newsletter for almost two long tortuous years. Since purchasing an ST in August 1985, I have restricted myself to strictly 16 bit news, gossip and reviews. My 130XE sits gathering dust in a closet. Mid Michigan beware. I am not known for concise treatises. I see that Brian Goluska of CHAOS has been covering most of the ST happenings in the Lansing area. It should be interesting to see how we view some of the new software as it appears. I'm sure we won't always agree.

Don't forget that original pictures that I choose to use on one of the GAG Library Disks will earn your choice of a free disk. In five months I've had one person take me up on this offer. Pretty pathetic, folks! Everyone has NEO and a mouse. Let's put them to use.

Available at the September meeting in addition to 3 or 4 new disks which I described last month will be a complete listing of the GAG ST Disk Library with descriptions of all the files

on the disks. The library should have 20 different disks by the September meeting at a paltry $4 per disk. It cost me $5.25 for my first 3 1/2 inch disk barely a year ago. It wasn't even formatted!

The Saturday Workshops will begin on the fourth Saturday of September. At the regular September meeting we will discuss how to best utilize these sessions.

ST attendance has been meager at the last few meetings especially considering the growing number of GAG members who now own ST's. We need more ST people to start making things happen. If you have a question, comment, gripe, or are just plain curious, plan to attend. I am currently in the dark as to the sorts of things the members would like covered at the meetings. I would still like to get a Pascal programming Sig off the ground but do not have the time or expertise to organize it. Any volunteers?

As you know the officer elections are coming up in October. If anyone would like to run for either the disk librarian or 16 bit vice president position, I would be more than happy to step aside for new blood. We need more members to become actively involved in the complicated and sometimes bizarre inner workings of the group.

Everyone gets off easy this month...but watch out for October!

Review

VOICEMASTER
Reviewed by Jack Mindy
Reprinted from POKEY PRESS, June 1986

I'll admit I'm a sucker for high-tech gimmicks. Covox, Inc., must have seen me coming when they designed Voicemaster. It's neat, it's fun, it's interesting. It may even have a practical use. Who cares? I'm the first on my block to have a voice recognition system. And even if it's nothing but a toy, Voicemaster does give a look into the future.

Unlike a voice synthesizer (S.A.M., Voicebox, et al.) which CREATES human-sounding speech electronically, Voicemaster records and reproduces your own voice digitally, storing the electronic signals in your computer's memory. The Voicemaster package consists of a small, flat plastic box which holds the electronics, and a lightweight telephone operator-type headset. Cables to connect the pieces to your computer are also included, along with the program disc.

So what can I do?

For starters, put on the headset, boot the demo program on the disk and say a word. You'll hear the computer repeat that word, in your own voice. Unfortunately, this is when you run into a major disappointment with Voicemaster. You'll recognize your voice, all right, but the sound is buried in a raspy, scratchy, static-like noise. We'll have to write off this aspect to price. A truly professional voice digitizer just isn't available yet in this price range.

If your main interest is getting some sort of spoken word from your computer, Voicemaster won't be much of a bargain. From my own experience, Alien Group's Voicebox is an excellent voice synthesizer that's reasonably easy to work with.

However, Voicemaster's strong points are waiting to be discovered. The disc contains a fascinating example of its voice recognition capabilities. You can play Blackjack against the computer, without so much as touching the keyboard or twiddling a joystick. After you recite a list of about twenty words and numbers into the headset microphone, Voicemaster is ready to receive your commands verbally. Tell it how many dollars you want to bet, the "dealer" shuffles the appropriate number of cards to you and "the house". The graphics, though simple, are fast. Tell Voicemaster whether you want another card (hit) or not (stand). The screen shows each card as it is dealt. The "dealer" tells who won, and waits for you to place your next bet – verbally.

Whether or not you're a gambler, you can't help but be intrigued by this new hands-off method of playing cards. And you'll find yourself using the word "neat" a lot.

But Voicemaster is more than a game. The extensive documentation, 50 pages worth (unfortunately on flimsy newsprint-type paper), clearly explains how to add these voice recognition capabilities to your own programs.

The Voicemaster's controlling software uses what Covox calls "wedged in" BASIC commands. Once the machine language program is loaded, 18 commands (19 for the Atari 800) are added to BASIC, for use anywhere in your own program. Commands like LEARN, SPEAK, PAUSE, VOLUME, TRAIN, RECOGnize, SPEED, SCREEN, etc., are very

simple to understand and use. Although the
thorough instruction manual seems a bit
ponderous at first glance, it is well written
in a pleasant, casual style. Learning
Voicemaster won't take long at all.

The demonstration program on the Voicemaster
disc also contains a number of other
voice-operated programs. CALCULATOR will never
replace your trusty desk-model Casio, but it's
fun to play with. It could probably be worked
into a math practice game for the kids. CLOCK
will tell you the time in your own voice (raspy
though it may be), and even wake you up at the
appointed time. But it's not too practical
either, since the digital read-out loses about
five seconds every time you press the space bar
to hear the time spoken. However, the
documentation suggests a possible solution for
the interested programmer. BARGRAPH displays a
number of frequency ranges, showing the
relative highs and lows as moving bars on the
screen. Whatever the headset microphone hears
will appear graphically on your TV. It's fun
to watch your voice for a while, but probably
doesn't have any programming value.

I've saved the Voicemaster's big bonus for last
- the Voice Harp Composer. (The What?) The
Voice Harp Composer is what I hoped Music
Construction Set would be. Even a person such
as I, with absolutely no music training, can
hum or whistle into the headset microphone and
see his musical notes take shape as they scroll
across the screen. With the various
one-keypress control functions, aided by a
useful help screen, all of the computer's
voices can join in, filtered, harmonized,
distorted, at your whim. If you hit a wrong
note while humming it into memory, a generous
selection of edit functions allow you to "hum
in" a new note to replace the clinker, or
delete it, or insert a rest, or change your
eighth note to a quarter note, etc. And a
screen dump is provided, so you can print out
your own sheet music!

The Voice Harp Composer doesn't play back your
whistling or humming; it turns your notes into
a real piece of computer music.

Neat!

Voicemaster has two drawbacks. As I mentioned
before, the voice playback reproduction is
terribly low quality. The output is akin to
comparing an Edison cylinder to a modern
Compact Disc. The other, more minor, problem
comes in voice recognition. When giving verbal
commands to Voicemaster, you must remember to
pronounce the word the same way you did when it
was "learning" that word. If you teach it the
word "ee-rase" Voicemaster may not recognize
"uh-rase". Similarly, it might mistake

"ee-nuff" for "ee-rase". But it doesn't take
long to get the hang of it. Much like
conversing with a visitor from a foreign
country, you must be consistent in your
pronunciation and you have to try to look at
things from the visitor's frame of reference.
Don't worry, you'll get along just fine.

As a matter of fact, this moderate sensitivity
to consistent pronunciation might come in handy
for foreign language vocabulary drills.

Voicemaster might be a bit disappointing as far
as playback goes, but it's like expecting a toy
robot to do what Luke Skywalker's buddy, C3PO,
could do. Certainly a higher degree of
technology is available somewhere, but not for
anything near Voicemaster's moderate price.
You might dream of a Ferrari, but a Mustang can
be a lot of fun, too.
And they throw in the nifty Voice Harp Composer
as part of the deal.

Neat!

The above is available from:
Covox, Inc.
675 Conger St., Dept. AC
Eugene, OR 97402
(503) 342-1271

A demo Talking Disk is available for $5.00 and
the Complete Package is available for under
$90.00. Specify make and model of computer
when ordering.

Just Starting

Alternative Dos-Styles
by Leo Sell

Once you are familiar with DOS 2.0/2.5, you may
find that you want more power and features.
For instance, if you are following our
recommendation and using only single density,
not the enhanced density of DOS 2.5, you may
now want to upgrade to true double-density.

Double-density doubles the amount of
information you can place on a disk. The
storage capacity is increased from 90k per side
to 180k per side. You can then store a lot
more files. Double-density is also preferred
over enhanced-density because it avoids
compatibility problems. Most third-party
drives will read/write either single or double
density, but not enhanced-density.

Another reason to upgrade DOS's presents itself when you have a mixture of densities in your library — single and double (and hopefully not enhanced). Such a mixture of densities can be confusing and frustrating unless you have a "smart" DOS that is capable of sensing the density of a disk automatically.

Other reasons to upgrade include batch file capabilities, ramdisk support, and RAM-residency.

There are several alternative DOS's that I use. Different ones serve different needs. This section is not a review of those products, but only my own comments and recommendations.

MYDOS — MYDOS is suitable for anyone that wants a "power DOS", while retaining menu-driven convenience. The latest versions of MYDOS are capable of controlling 3.5, 5.25, 8 inch and hard drives. Subdirectories are supported. MYDOS is also density-smart and it supports ANY Ramdisk configuration.

One menu option allows you to customize the MYDOS files to suit your needs. You can change the Ramdisk to any valid drive number, make DUP.SYS RAM-resident so that calling DOS from Basic won't be fatal to your program, turn write-verify on/off, and more. Power, coupled with ease of use, is the byword of MYDOS.

DOSXL — DOSXL is produced by Optimized Systems Software. It is a command-driven DOS. There are no menus, only a prompt such as "D1:". (There is a menu option, but DOSXL is more effective from the command prompt). DOSXL is used by entering commands after the prompt, such as DIR for a directory of files.

There are a number of features that make DOSXL attractive. One is that some people relate better to a command-driven DOS like this one. It is also RAM-resident, so using the DOS command from Basic is not fatal to the program in RAM. Another advantage of DOSXL is that it is not very sensitive to End-Of-File errors. Often, if a downloaded file won't otherwise load, DOSXL will load it. At times, there also seems to be less memory conflict. Sometimes a file that will load, but not run, under another DOS, will load and run under DOSXL. DOSXL supports both batch files and AUTORUN.SYS. There is a version called DOSXLI, that is density-smart. And DOSXL supports many public-domain, ramdisk drivers. All in all, DOSXL is a good DOS to help round things out and solve certain problems.

SPARTADOS — This is the new darling of the Power-Users, and with good reason. It supports most drive configurations (including hard drives), subdirectories, all configurations of ramdisks, and so on. At one time, one version supported batch files, while another supported AUTORUN.SYS. The latest version supports both. It is density-smart, to an extreme. All of this, yet it takes less user-RAM, and therefore has fewer memory conflicts, than almost any other DOS alternative. On top of everything else, if you are a 1050 owner, it is a bargain. SPARTADOS comes as a bonus with the U.S. DOUBLER, the favored product for upgrading the 1050 to true double-density. The only thing to be said against SPARTADOS is a few odd bugs and its potential for incompatibilities. An XL or XE is almost required to use SPARTADOS effectively. It is a real Power-DOS. A more complete review of SPARTADOS is found elsewhere in the magazine. (Next Issue! ED.)

Well, these three are the DOS's I primarily use. They all have their uses. For those of you that want to stay with DOS 2.0/2.5, there are a still a few hints for you. Some of them may work with an alternative DOS, but the following applies mostly to DOS 2.0/2.5.

CUSTOMIZING DOS

There are a few things that you may want to do to "customize" DOS 2.0/2.5. Be sure you do these things on a backup or something other than your original, or your only copy of DOS.

SPEED IT UP — The reason that DOS 2.0/2.5 seems to write so slowly, is because it verifies everything that it writes. Most of the time you don't need to verify writes, so why not turn verification off. Doing so will speed up DOS considerably. Here's how:

1. Boot DOS 2.0/2.5, with Basic in.
2. Type POKE 1913,80 and press Return.
3. Type DOS and press Return.
4. From the DOS menu, use option H to write new DOS files to your disk.

You now have a version of DOS 2.0/2.5 with the write-verify turned off. It's Supercharged!

ADD OR SUBTRACT A DRIVE — DOS 2.0/2.5 is originally configured for a maximum of 2 drives. To increase or decrease the number of drives, do the following:

1. Boot DOS 2.0/2.5 with Basic.
2. Type POKE 1802,X where X equals
   the following, and press Return:

Nbr of drives	Make X equal to
1	1
2	3
3	7
4	15

3. Type DOS and press Return.
4. From the DOS menu, use option H to
   write the new DOS files.

Now you can have DOS address the number of
drives needed to suit your needs. When memory
needs to be conserved, configure for 1 drive.
When you need to address more drives, up to 4,
configure for that.

A NEW CASE

Normally, you can use only Alpha characters in
filenames. Numbers and punctuation are not
allowed in DOS 2.0/2.5, although they may be
used in other DOS's. This procedure will
customize DOS so that you can use upper or
lower case and some limited punctuation such as
the underline character or right and left
brackets:

1. Boot DOS, with Basic active.
2. Type POKE 3818,47:POKE 3822,123,
   and press Return.
3. Type DOS and press Return.
4. Use DOS option H to rewrite the DOS
files to
         your disk.

The POKEs used instruct the computer to accept
ATASCII values between 48 and 123 as valid
filename characters.

ON THE WILD SIDE

Wildcard side that is. If you really want to
confuse yourself, or someone else, use this
procedure to change the value of the wildcard
character to something more to your liking (?):

1. Boot DOS with Basic active.
2. Type POKE 3783,X, where X equals the
   ATASCII value of the new wildcard
   character. For instance, to change
   the character to "+", POKE 3783,46.
   Press Return.
3. Type DOS and press Return.
4. Use DOS option H to write new DOS
   files to your disk.

A table of ATASCII values is found in Appendix
C of the old Atari Basic manual. Have fun with
this one!

A HELPFUL HINT

An End-of-File error is usually Error #164. It
means that some garbage has gotten into the
file. If there isn't a lot of it, you may be
able to force DOS to load the file, giving you
the opportunity to fix it. First, load your
.45... On second thought, try the following:

1. Boot DOS, with Basic active.
2. Type POKE 4148,234:POKE 4149,234
3. LOAD your program from Basic, or DOS
   option L, as appropriate.

If all works out, you can load the file and
clean it up.

INCONCLUSIVELY SPEAKING

This article was supposed to be the third and
last in a series. But, more and more comes up,
so you're stuck. Next month I will try to have
some information about using DOS functions from
Basic. Til then....

ST
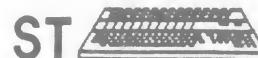
ST VS. HIGH END 8-BIT COMPUTERS
NO HOLDS BARRED COMPARISON
Excerpted from the ATARI Dealer News

It amazes us that some people will still pay
$500 to $1000 for an 8-bit computer system,
when for the same price they can get a complete
520ST setup that will outperform any 8-bit
machine in every measurable detail.

There are two good examples of overpriced 8-bit
systems that are still available in today's
marketplace: the APPLE // series and the
Commodore 128. Complete with disk drive, the
Commodore is less than $100 below the price of
a 520ST, while the Apple actually costs much
more -- for a more poorly performing product.
How can this be?

Inertia.

Both products are coasting on the existing base
of their predecessors. The original Apple][

was first sold in 1977, while the C128 is based on both the C64 (1982) and CP/M (circa 1976). The advantage is that both systems are somewhat compatible with a large software base, and are known entities for institutions like schools. But is this really a good thing?

Both machines are designed around what is essentially outmoded technology. Lets face it, the semiconductor field has advanced quite a bit every year since these machines were developed. Chips can now integrate many more circuits than they could a few years back -- one of the main reasons why ATARI can make the ST system for so little compared to these "toy" computers. At this time it costs less to design a system around the powerful 68000 chip than it did to build around the simple 6502 or Z80 series a few years back.

MICROPROCESSOR: the ST uses a 68000 chip which handles data 32 bits at a time internally and 16 bits at a time externally. The 6502 and Z80 are limited primarily to 8 bits, so they work harder on big operations. Above all this, the 68000 works at 8 million cycles per second compared to 1 or 2 million for the 8-bitters. Not only does it work harder, it does the hard work faster.

BUILT-IN SOFTWARE: the operating systems of the Apple and Commodore are primitive 16K programs compared to the 192K of TOS in the ST. Where the 8-bit systems provide basic input/output functions with a separate DOS, the ST integrates both of these along with graphics features, windowing, menus, and mouse, plus the desktop. The additional programming in the ST makes it easier for users to understand.

MEMORY: the 520SST includes 512K of RAM, where the Apple and the Commodore only provide up to 128K. The ST has big-league capacity for the kinds of problems that you really need a computer for.

VIDEO DISPLAY: the ST gives you 3 modes to choose from, including a special high-resolution monochrome mode of 640 X 400 pixels, perfect for text operations. Both the ST's monitors provide unusually crisp and vivid images that the 8-bit machines can't compete with. This is because the "video shifter" chip in the ST uses the latest in technology and operates at an outstanding 32 million cycles per second.

SOFTWARE: here's why the public perceives an advantage for 8-bitters. They have thousands of packages to choose from today, compared to hundreds on the ST. But numbers alone don't tell the whole story. The kind of software we are seeing on the ST is far beyond the capabilities of the 8-bit systems. Word Processors use the ST's widow environment to provide ease of use that is impossible on the 8-bits -- they don't have the speed or the memory capacity to make it practical. Sophisticated personal and business applications abound on the ST that are completely impossible on the 8-bits. And the rate at which new titles are released for the ST has been far greater than for the 8-bits, so the disparity in the number of titles will disappear very soon.

So, when someone suggests that one of the high-priced 8-bit computers are anything less than relics of a previous age, we just shake our heads and wonder.

8 EIGHT IS ENOUGH

THE LITTLE COMPUTER THAT COULD...
PART 1
By Richard Barnes

During the past few years, the Atari 8-bit computers as well as a number of other 8-bit computers have been passed over for the glamour and speed of the 16-bit and more recently, the promise of 32-bit home units. These afford higher speed and greater capacity while handling more complex programs.

All the while, the computer manufacturers have tried to convince the public that bigger is better and that the older technology simply can't compare with the new. This higher technology also commands a higher price tag.

Most companies now are not supporting their 8-bit units. This lack of support quickly appears in the software marketplace. Naturally these manufacturers want to be with the most popular equipment, besides if people cannot get new software, they will buy a new machine so that they can remain up to date with the new technology.

When you were children, you probably read a story called "The Little Engine That Could", well the 8-Bit Atari is the Little Computer That Could! The capabilities of this unit are amazing. When you compare this to the price you paid for the equipment then the system is unbeatable.

When someone with an MS-DOS system kids you about having a toy computer, remember, they've spent ten times what you have and probably didn't need the expanded capabilities anyway.

Speed and capacity seem to be the selling points most often addressed. True, the speed can't be matched since the microprocessor is operating at 4.7 or 8 MHz instead of the 1.79 of the Atari, but does this justify such a high increase in price? The standard capacity of the 130XE is only 128K, but this can be increased to 1 Meg through modifications. Once again, not nearly worth the price difference. Most home applications and many business applications do not require the speed or the increased capacity.

For a minimal investment in equipment, the little Atari 8-bit can go almost anywhere the big boys go. You all are familiar with Compuserve and the Source and I'm sure that you've heard of a number of Commercial Databases across the country such as Dialog, BRS, Medlars, Infomaster, etc. You can access any of the above using the Atari 8-bit and a 300 or 1200 baud modem. You only need your password and you're online with the Database. To give you an idea of the information available through these databases, look at the following:
      BRS - Over 70 Databases covering a wide range of topics.
      Dialog - Over 200 Databases covering a wider range of topics.
      Medlars - 18 Databases covering Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Health Administration,etc.
      Infomaster - Over 700 Databases including portions of Dialog, BRS, and Medlars.

Although prices vary widely and can range from around $15.00 per hour to $300.00 per hour with a few specialized databases at even higher prices, the average ranges between $40.00 to $50.00 per hour depending on the vendor. A well prepared search strategy can obtain the required results in a matter of minutes at a price of only a few dollars.

The Atari 8-bit with an minimal investment of a disk drive, modem and optional printer can access all of the above data systems. Research work on a subject is pinpointed and can be accomplished in a minimum of time. The readout can be either bibliographic or full text in nature and can also provide the necessary verification for inter-library loans if your library does not have the article.

Infomaster will even ask you questions and then take you to the proper database and run the search for you. You are then billed by the number of topics searched and the number of citations received.

Don't underestimate your little "toy" computer. It has the capability of going where the big boys go and acting as if it belongs there.

Rumors

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE:

We heard that KMART was suing ATARI for breach of contract. The story was that ATARI promised the Michigan-based mass marketer exclusive sales for the 1040 ST, then decided not to sell ANY 1040's through mass market outlets. An injunction was restraining ANY 1040's from being sold in Michigan until it was resolved. ABSOLUTELY NO SUBSTANTIATION of this rumor has been found. ATARI reps and sysops on the ATARI SIG of COMPUSERVE found it to be ...interesting. By the way, more 1040's should be on dealer shelves (even in Michigan) any time now, as production is (supposed to be) up and running.

The MACINTOSH emulator cartridge for the ATARI ST that you heard a lot about a few months ago? It will shortly be available for sale - WITHOUT the APPLE ROM that makes it work. You have to buy that from an APPLE dealer on your own, as APPLE won't sell the chips to other manufacturers. The disk format is different for the MAC as well, so programs will need to transferred from a MAC to be stored on ST format... but that's a one-time hassle.

ATARI is also about to release a VT-100 emulator cartridge for the ST. It will pretend it is a disk directory to your desktop.

The "BLITTER" chip for the ST is nearing release form. Instant text scrolling in BASIC, window so fast you can't see them come or go, etc. are reported by those lucky enough to have seen the development prototypes. Plans now are for TWO different formats for th chip- a one-piece square chip for the new production ST machines, and as a set of SIX NEW ROMS plus the BLITTER for upgrading old units. The ROMS would just plug in, while the BLITTER would be piggybacked on the 68000 CPU.

ATARI now says their 1200 baud direct connect modem will be ready for release by the end of SEPTEMBER. Any bets?

INDUS disk drives are turning on their owners. We have recieved more reports of non-co-operation when attempting use with other brand disk drives. One older model Indus was fine with my PERCOM drive, but two new ones refused to talk to it. Another club member reports that his INDUS was happy with his 1050 online with it until he got a HPPY for his 1050. Now HE is unhappy since the Indus now won't work if the 1050 is plugged in. Are they just tempermental? If we talk to them nice and

buy them premuim disks, will they make up and speak to us again? Any information would be welcome.

Speaking of HAPPYs, HAPPY VERSION 7 is (finally) shipped to all registered owners. The disk-backup system company has drawn a lot of heat for the long promised version 7, and now that it is out, many users are less than thrilled with the "improvements". Version 7 will indeed make copies of protected programs that version 6 could not- but most of the backup programs will be made into a special format ONLY readable on a HAPPY DRIVE. This ought to make the software houses a bit HAPPIER since the stuff can't as easily flow into the pirate market that way, but for those users who want legitimate backups, this scheme has major problems. Consider a PERCOM owner... the PERCOM MUST be drive #1, so a HAPPY would be drive #2... and since the backup will ONLY run on a HAPPY, how do you BOOT off of DRIVE #2? Double YUK.

Meanwhile, THE DUPLICATOR (another protected disk backup device) has gotten some TERRIBLE reviews, although MANY of the complaints were explained by the company in a thorough response. It seems that a new software package is now available for it (shades of HAPPY 7)

that supposedly now surpasses all other backup systems. There remains suspicion, but THE DUPLICATOR people are sticking to their guns and promising satisfaction. Time will tell.

Telecom

P:R:CONNECTION and AVATEX 1200-
PENTHOUSE PERFORMANCE AT BASEMENT PRICES?
By John Nagy

How much will YOU pay to get into 1200 baud telecommunication? The computer hardware business has always been a race. The PRICE of a product is directly related to the POWER and TIME of availablility. That ATARI 800 you (or somebody, anyway) paid over a THOUSAND DOLLARS for is now outperformed by units well under $100.
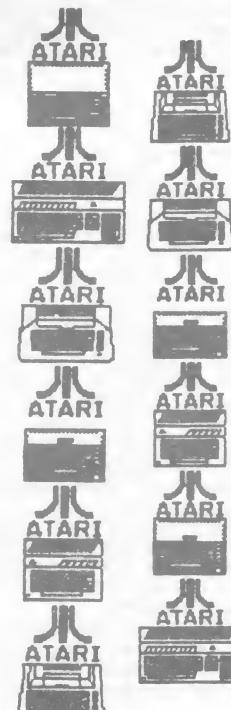
Some of us are waiting for the promised $99 1200 baud direct-connect modem ATARI has promised for release ... someday. Others bought a $195 850 interface and slapped on a $500 Hayes modem ages ago. In the middle (finally) are some very attractive options.
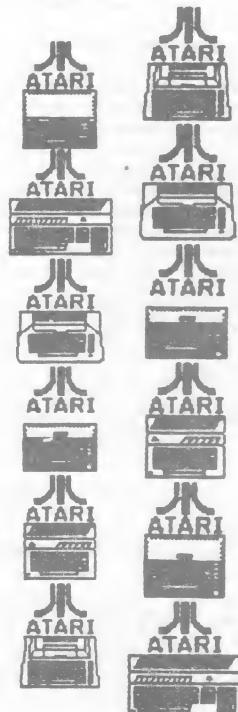
ICD CORP (those inventive folks who brought you the U.S. DOUBLER, SPARTADOS, and are promising the MIO BOX for a MEG of EXTERNAL ramdisk!) is now peddling the P:R: CONNECTION as a replacement for the now rare ATARI 850 series/parallel interface box. It is touted as doing nearly EVERYTHING an 850 does, JUST LIKE an 850 would do. And it costs under $69, available discounted as low as $49!

At the same time, the AVATEX 1200 modem is appearing in many ads for $89- claiming full HAYES compatibility. Suddenly it looks like the cost of 1200 baud is in reach! IF, that is, these products can perform to satisfaction.

I had the opportunity to find out as the CHAOS BBS changed over to 300/1200 baud a couple of months ago. We already had a real 850 interface, so I was very familiar with its use and performance. We purchased a VOLKSMODEM 12, as it was well promoted and reasonably priced at around $169 at the time. It was NOT a happy combination. Although it was a very nice HAYES type modem, I could NOT get the VOLKS to return to ANSWER mode if a 1200 baud caller hung up. It required a hard reset - turning it off, then back on, to get ready for the next caller. Not willing to sit by the BBS full-time nor wishing to build a computer-driven power relay to keep using it, I begged around to try a few other brands to see if better luck could be borrowed or stolen.

My first shot was a SMARTEAM 1200. It was promoted by KEITH LEDBETTER in the doc for EXPRESS! 850 as being the most fully HAYES COMPATIBLE modem he had seen, and HIS recommendation was good enough for me. Sure enough, it behaved like it was supposed to. It even LOOKED like a HAYES modem, and was also about $170. I did feel that the carrier level was awfully low, causing some long-distance callers to not get a carrier detect. For that reason and because I was certain that the owner of the SMARTEAM was NOT interested in owning a certain VOLKSMODEM 12 that was waiting around for a possible trade, I kept looking.

The Cheap in me cried out to try the bottom of the barrel- The AVATEX 1200 was nearly FREE by comparison to the other HAYES types. I found a club member who was having some trouble setting his AVATEX up (he bought it for $70!) and I promised to see what I could do. We played with it for a whole evening, and found several interesting (and some dissapointing) things.

First, it DID work. But those pretty LED's on the front that look like they are ready to give you all the same information about your connection that a HAYES and the SMARTEAM did?

Sorry, they are MOSTLY for the extensive internal test routines. It did finally work pretty well with EXPRESS! 850, although it didn't want to hang up at first. It turns out that making a cable was NOT AT ALL straightforward, as AVATEX has collapsed several RS-232 control lines into one, and dropped others altogether. Fortunately, as of August, 1986, the AVATEX is shipped with a SUPPLEMENT to its manual, and the actual wiring for many common systems is laid out pin-for-pin.

Most disturbing was the 300/1200 baud switch on the front. It must be MANUALLY switched AND the power switch had to be pushed off then on again EVERY TIME you change baud! ICK! Your terminal software ALSO has to be separately switched to match baud rate, else you get nowhere fast. ICK ICK!

Additionally, the command set IS "HAYES TYPE" although the AVATEX has only a subset of those commands. Some nifty things are permanently set for you, others are left out completely. You can't: set number of rings before answer; switch or select the type of command and error echos; go off-line to command mode while connected; set ANY timing parameters for carrier; hear the audio of the line during connect (there's no speaker!).

Now that's a lot to be missing. But honestly, most of that stuff is never used by the hobbyist, or can be certainly worked around. And for the nearly $100 savings, many of us can be persuaded to push a couple buttons to set baud before we place a call. If you are are one of these, the AVATEX is just dandy. Happily, the AVATEX WILL set baud rate automatically if it RECIEVES a call in auto-answer mode. AHA! Lemme borrow it for the BBS.

Thats when I discovered that the result codes from status commands were not the same as a "normal" HAYES-type modem. OOPS! Lets work on that cable some more. I sure wish I had the wiring supplement when I started work on the cable! Here's how it should be wired (for those who STILL are having trouble!):

850/P:R: PIN							MODEM PIN
1	.	.	.	.	.	.	20
2	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
3	.	.	.	.	.	.	2
4	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
5	.	.	.	.	.	.	7
6	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
8	.	.	.	.	.	.	5

Additionally, the lack of online/offline command mode made it touchy for hang-up detection. As soon as the carrier is lost, the modem goes into full-echo command mode. If there is output from the BBS going to the modem, it echos right back, making the BBS beleive it is getting responses to its prompts. This "internal chatting" can go on for HOURS, tying up the phone line if the BBS software doesn't check the closed-modem status for carrier until a period of no input arrives. (Most do it this way to prevent lost characters from the user!) The fix was easy enough, just putting another open modem routine at the problem areas. Before the "loop" gets too far, the open modem forces a check for carrier, and you are back to normal.

The UP side of all this is that after a minimum of twiddle on the BBS software, it was happy as clams running on the cheapest 1200 in town. We haven't had a single modem-related problem in 2 months of testing and now running online, often to the tune of over 50 calls a day. We traded our Volks away to the AVATEX owner, and now HE's happy not to push buttons, and I'm happy not to be crashing.

You may be intrigued to know that the SUPRA 1200 AT and the SUPRA 1200 ST are THE SAME MODEM as the AVATEX, although the AT version has an ATARI 8-bit interface built in. You do not need any other kind of interface with the AT version, although you LOSE control of the DTR (HANG-UP) line, making it almost useless for a BBS (but maybe O.K. for the home). The SUPRA 1200 ST is EXACTLY THE SAME as the AVATEX except for the nameplate, so buy for price... and that probably means the AVATEX.

The SMARTEAM modem came over for testing along with a P:R: CONNECTION, so I got to put it through its paces too.

About the size of a cigarette pack, the P:R: CONNECTION from ICD has 2 serial ports and one parallel port (as compared to the 850 with 4 and one). It uses no power supply, instead, it pulls power from the computer through the daisy chain. This means problems requiring internal mods in a 1200XL, but otherwise works out fine. Not having another power plug to deal with is always nice. But beware: unplugging any part of the daisy chain (the disk drives or whatever) causes a loss of power to the P:R:, often requiring a reboot to reset scrambled instructions! It also seems it MIGHT be a bit delecate... the one I tested died while it was here, although ICD replaced it in about 2 days!

Operationally, it seems to mimic an 850 with great ease. All the handlers and programs I tried on it worked fine, and it convinced the

software an 850 was indeed on the wire. I did notice a few minor differences in behavior... A real 850 lets you close the modem and quash the characters left in its output buffer into the twilight zone, while the P:R: CONNECTION holds the channel open a bit longer to allow them to clear. This MIGHT be seen as a feature, as you won't be clipping your output by accident. However, it slows things down a bit more than I like at 1200 baud on the BBS. I prefer to have the control available and settle things in the software, but the casual user won't ever notice this sort of thing.

CONCLUSIONS:

The P:R: CONNECTION is about as good an interface as you will find for the 8-bit ATARI today. The multiple ports are all anyone is every likely to use, and its few non-850like features are hardly a problem for most users. The price makes it a best buy.

The AVATEX (a.k.a. SUPRA) 1200 baud modem is the most modem the money can buy... although the user will have to decide for himself if that's enough modem for HIM. Pressing the baud and power buttons is not much to do to save upwards of $100, but it gets old quick... Be sure you can live with it before you invest.

For a BBS, the AVATEX is a SUPER modem, assuming you can do the little fudging here and there to make it work right with your software. Try it out by calling the CHAOS BBS, (517) 371-1106!

PIRATE PATROL

COMPUSERVE's message bases buzzed this month with more news on PIRATES and PIRACY. Here is but a sample, presented thanks to RON KOVACS' ZMAGAZINE August 9, 1986 (excerpted).

HOT News/Rumors 06-Aug-86 16:04:56 Sb: Pirate Zappers Fm: LOYD 76703,207 To: All
6 August, 1986

Twelve of the industry's leading software developers and the Software Publishers Association (SPA) announced today that they have taken direct action by closing down a notorious pirate BBS system located in Cincinnati Ohio. The "Star Chamber" bulletin board system had more than 40 megabytes of Atari 8 bit and ST software,with many hundreds of copyrighted titles available. The twelve publishers, all of whom publish Atari ST software are;

Antic Software Batteries Included Digital Research Hippopotamus Software Infocom Megamax Michtron Procopy Quickview Systems Quantum Microsystems Regent Software Xlent Software

The closing today of a major illegal BBS system through a joint effort of concerned publishers is only the first of several similar actions anticipated. In a joint statement issued by the group a commitment was made to aggressively root out similar law-breakers as they are found. "The days are over when someone can illegally transmit copyrighted software via BBS systems," said Mark Skapinker of Batteries Included. "We're all fed up with tolerating theft of our products and we intend on going after these scoff-laws aggressively," said Gordon Monnier of Michtron.

As a follow-up to this success the companies involved are discussing the creation at fall Comdex 1986 of a permanent watch-dog group to make it clear to pirates that their days are numbered.

The following text is an EDITED set of replies to the above, pros-cons:

Fm: SYSOP*Mike Schoenbach To: LOYD

This made my day! It's fantastic that the software companies worked together to close down a major pirate system. It makes me think that all hope is not lost, and we will rid ourselves of these thieves. My compliments go to all the software companies involved. I hope this is just the beginning!

Fm: SYSOP*R. Brudzynski To: LOYD

Yum! Delicious!
Any idea when the Cincinnati police are going to auction off the thief's equipment? You can get some great bargains at police auctions--puter's, modems, and drives for sale at mere fractions of their original price! Frankly, I think they ought to GIVE the equipment to whoever turned the dope in, but, until they do, I don't mind picking up some bargains!

Fm: Jim Campbell To: SYSOP*R. Brudzynski

Frankly, it seems to me that the equipment is not really in the police's domain. Why does the equipment that they used belong to the police?? If you used your car to illegally transport goods, does the car then belong to the police for them to auction it off? What a joke, and just as wrong as piracy – whether it is 'called' legal or not!!!

Fm: Bill Wilkinson To: Jim Campbell

Not true!!!!! They put the money in general fund and part of general fund is used to prosecute the thieves. I would guess that if a thief wanted to pay all his own prosecution costs he could keep the equipment. Why should _WE_ pay all the costs to send this guy to prison when there is valuable equipment sitting there which can be sold to help pay for it?

Fm: SYSOP*R. Brudzynski To: Jim Campbell

It's the law--and has been for a few hundred years! The federal and most state governments have statutes providing for confiscation of property used in the commission of a crime. What's more--they can keep it even if the alleged malefactor isn't convicted! (He can sue to get it back.)

The laws, ironically, harken back to the days when real pirates sailed the seven seas. After the pirate had been caught, there was always

the problem of what to do with the ship. The pirate had no more use for it--he was usually swinging from the yardarm.

The state doesn't have to confiscate property if it doesn't want to. (It usually doesn't because it's a big headache to manage.) It is, however, a popular practice in drug cases and computer crime. The Federal government regularly sells off a lot of cars, boats, and planes that have been seized with drugs inside. (In fact, CIS has a service which announces some of these auctions.)

In the case of computer crime, the rationale, with which I am in accord, is to take away the little bugger's burglar tools. The punishment is effective and appropriate; selling it at a public auction will help honest users put the equipment to honest use.

I haven't seen any cases where I felt the police were being unfair or arbitrary in their confiscation of computer equipment used in the commission of a computer crime.

I don't think that the police should return burglar tools to the burglars or computers to software thieves.

Fm: Bill Colburn To: LOYD

I can hardly wait to turn in some MAJOR Atari 8 bit pirates in Philadelphia! As a matter of fact, I will put this information where it will do the most good. Thanks for giving me some hope again. I had practically given up on fighting software piracy. Let's get those darn pirates and string them up where they belong.

Fm: GLENN GORMAN To: LOYD

YOU PEOPLE MAKE ME SICK!!!! WHO IS THE REAL PIRATE THE GUY THAT TRIES A PROGRAM AND FINDS THAT IT IS GOOD AND SHARES IT OR THE SOFTWARE COMPANY THAT SELLS CRAPPY SOFTWARE FOR $40.00???? TELL ME WHY I CAN'T TRY A PROGRAM BEFORE HAVE TO FORK OVER THE MONEY????? IF I GO OUT AND SPEND $40.00 FOR A PROGRAM AND IT TURNS OUT TO BE A WASTE OF MY MONEY, WILL THE SOFTWARE COMPANY REFUND MY MONEY????? NO THEY WON'T THEY'LL ONLY TRY TO SELL ME ANOTHER USELESS DISK!!!! MY LIBRARY IS FILLED WITH PROGRAMS THAT I HAVE ONLY PLAYED ONCE. YEA I HAVE HUNDREDS OF USELESS PROGRAMS THAT I HAVE PURCHASED. I ALSO HAVE PROGRAMS THAT I USE EVERYDAY WHICH I WENT OUT AND BOUGHT BECAUSE I FIRST SAW A SO CALLED PIRATED PROGRAM. THE REAL PIRATES ARE THE ONES WHO DO NOT BUY THE ORIGINAL AFTER TRING OUT A COPY.

Fm: SYSOP*R. Brudzynski To: GLENN GORMAN

Geee! I don't have that problem at all! I make it a practice not to shop at stores that won't demo the software for me. I also demand to read the documentation so I'm sure that the software will meet my expectations.

I'm sure that if you follow those two simple rules, you'll experience a lot less aggravation (you may even be able to use lower case letters in messages) and save a lot of hard-earned cash!

Fm: Bill Wilkinson To: GLENN GORMAN

WE will refund your money if you can specifically and clearly show us how the software is worthless. Will we do so just because of a minor bug or limitation? Of course not. Car dealers don't refund your money because the one you got gets 1 MPG less than the EPA estimates.

Still, I do understand your gripe. My answer is one which, unfortunately, is not available to all users. Buy your software at a reputable dealer and then only after you have seen it demonstrated. So few dealers will do demos of $40 software, though, because the profit is eaten up by the demo time. But user groups keep reviews on file, magazines review products (too often not too accurately, but still...), and reviews are certainly a legit use of BBS's and CIS. Your solution is, whether you like it or not, illegal. You -could- end up paying for your choice someday.

-Bill Wilkinson, OSS, Inc.

It went on that way for days... but the overall effect should be sobering to ANY BBS system operator who "shares" the "wealth". Piracy is becoming "declasse", and, like smoking and drugs, may someday be controlled through public awareness and personal responsibility.

♫ FEATURE OF THE MONTH ♫

"I AM A TEENAGE PIRATE"
Special Interview by Ron Kovacs
from Zmagazine August 9, 1986 (excerpted)

The following is the transcript of an interview with the Sysop of the "ATARI CONNECTION" BBS, one that was recently shut down due to piracy. The interview was conducted by RON KOVACS, editor of ZMAGAZINE.

The sysop has asked to keep his name private. His responses are in upper case text. This interview was taken 8-7-86

How long have you been running your BBS?

(Atari Connection Sysop)

WELL, LAST SUMMER I RAN A BBS CALLED THE 800 BBS, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH SUCCESS WITH IT, I PUT THE ATARI CONNECTION UP ON JUNE 2nd OF THIS YEAR.

(R) Why wasnt your old BBS a success?

(ACS) I THINK BECAUSE OF LACK OF ADVERTISING. BUT I WAS SHARING A PHONE AT THE TIME, AND SO MY HOURS WOULD WERE NOT LONG.

(R) When you had your BBS up, What type of features did you have, and In your opinion what do you think was the cause of your being caught with pirated software, and also, Did you have alot of software in your download section?

(ACS) I DIDN'T HAVE MANY OUT-OF-THE -ORDINARY FEATURES. IT WAS A BASIC BBCS BOARD. BUT I THINK THAT SOMEONE WHO WAS BLACKLISTED ON MY BOARD, PROBABLY REPORTED ME BECAUSE OF IT. AND I DIDN'T HAVE MANY DOWNLOADS AVAILABLE. ALTHOUGH I DO HAVE TWO 1050'S, ONE WAS BEING REPAIRED WHEN I HAD THE BOARD UP. SO AS A SPARE I USED RAMDISK.

(R) Why did you blacklist callers, did they do bad things on your system?

(ACS) ONE PERSON HAD THREE DIFFERENT HANDLES, AND WHEN I FOUND OUT, I BLACKLISTED ALL OF THEM. HE ALSO LEFT ME SOME NASTY MESSAGES ON OTHER BOARDS.

(R) In the matter of your shutdown, can you explain what happened?

(ACS) FIRST OF ALL, IT HAPPENED LAST MONDAY AT ABOUT 5:00pm, EXACTLY AN HOUR BEFORE I WAS TO LEAVE FOR A CONCERT. I GOT A PHONE CALL SAYING THAT IN A LITTLE WHILE, A DETECTIVE WOULD BE AT MY HOUSE INVESTIGATING SOME COMPLAINTS ABOUT A BBS. I IMMEDIATELY RAN DOWN AND ERASED MY USERLOG ON MY MAIN DISK, BUT I HID THE BACKUP DISK IN MY CLOSET. WHEN THE DETECTIVE ARRIVED, HE HAD SOMEONE ELSE WITH HIM. THEY ASKED ME A FEW QUESTIONS AND THEN TOOK MY MAIN DISK AND A FEW OTHERS, I GUESS FOR EVIDENCE. AND THEY TOLD ME THAT IF THEY GET COMPLAINTS AGAIN, THEY WILL REMOVE ALL OF MY HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE AND FINE ME $1000.

(R) Did you get any specific details as to why they singled your BBS out?

(ACS) THEY SAID THEY GOT COMPLAINTS FROM A FEW PEOPLE. BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN ONE. BUT I DOUBT IF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IS REALLY INTERESTED IN SHUTTING DOWN A SMALL BBS.

(R) What is the current status of this matter?

(ACS) RIGHT NOW I AM WAITING TO GET MY DISKS BACK. BUT I DON'T THINK I WILL HAVE TO GO TO COURT ANYMORE.

(R) Did you get a court notice or any advice pertaining to a hearing before?

NO, I WAS QUESTIONED ONCE BEFORE, BUT IT WAS ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

(R) Did the Police Department give you any other warnings?

(ACS) NO, I DON'T THINK THERE IS MUCH THEY CAN DO TO ME BESIDES FINE AND TAKING MY STUFF.

(R) Can you put up another BBS?? And if so, Would you?? and what would you do differently this time?

(ACS) I CAN PUT UP ANOTHER BOARD, BUT, THEY SAID I CAN'T PIRATE STUFF ON IT. I AM IN FACT, PUTTING ANOTHER BOARD UP IN EARLY NOVEMBER CALLED "THE CULT OF ATARI". IT WILL BE RUN ON BBS EXPRESS. THIS TIME I WILL BE MUCH MORE CAREFUL WITH WHO I LET ON. I WILL ASK MANY MORE QUESTIONS THEN JUST WHERE THEY LIVE.

(R) How old are you?

(ACS) 16, I TURN 17 IN OCTOBER.

(R) What has been your parents view of this matter?

(ACS) THEY DIDN'T CARE. THEY TOLD ME THAT IT IS MY PROBLEM AND I HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT MYSELF.

(R) Given the chance, and you found out who was the culprit, do you have any words you would like to pass to the party?

(ACS) WELL, FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO TELL HIM THAT I WOULD USE MY INFLUENCE TO GET HIM KICKED OFF EVERY LOCAL BBS. I WOULD ALSO SPREAD THE WORD WHO IT WAS, BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BE DISRUPTED BY THIS ACT.

(R) Do you think BBS systems should allow use of pirated software on their systems?

(ACS) IT IS UP TO THE SYSOP. BUT SINCE A MAJORITY OF THE BOARDS ARE, I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH IT. THE GOOD THINK ABOUT IT IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY $30-$40 DOLLARS IN THE STORE.

(R) What about the guy writing the software, shouldn't he be compensated for his effort, What is your opinion to this?

(ACS) WELL, I THINK THAT THE AUTHOR OF THE SOFTWARE IS RIPPING OFF THE PEOPLE WHO DO BUY THE SOFTWARE. THE PRICES OF SOFTWARE ARE MUCH TOO HIGH. ONE EXCEPTION IS MASTERTRONIC. MASTERTRONIC KEEPS THEIR PRICES BELOW $10. AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I HAVE ALREADY BOUGHT A FEW OF THEIR THINGS RECENTLY.

(R) In closing, Do you have any comments for other sysops on how they should run their systems now?

(ACS) WELL, I THINK THAT IF THEY FEEL THEY ARE SAFE, THERE IS NOTHING WRONG. BUT THE PERSON THAT REPORTED ME MUST BE CAUGHT AND PUNISHED. HE IS A DEFINITE THREAT TO THE COMPUTING WORLD.

(R) Do you have anything else you would like to add?

(ACS) I WOULD LIKE TO THANK STEVE THE KID FOR HELPING ME OUT WITH THIS SITUATION.

Obviously, this pirate is not in the least "reformed" by his brush(es) with the law. But he will soon be of age and then will be much more legally responsible and punishable. It is sad but interesting that he actually sees the "informant" to be a bigger threat to the computing public than the pirate.

We can hope that the fact that piracy IS REALLY GETTING LEGAL ATTENTION at last will give would-be pirates pause to consider their futures.

JL FEATURE OF THE MONTH JL

PIRATE PATROL

"I WAS A TEENAGE PIRATE"
by Jeff McWilliams

The typical software pirate is likely to read this and say to himself, "Yeah, another GOODIE-GOODIE complaining about people who copy disks." If you're a typical software 'pirate', and you're reading this, you should think about the damage that's being caused, and rethink your position. In my opinion, you should even rethink your involvement in a user group.

The purpose of a user group is to provide interactive support between its members and the Computer Company it supports. Anyone who illegally copies software is causing the computer and software industries to lose money.

Losing money will force them to quit wasting their time developing software for the Atari. If Atari has no software supporting their computers, then there will be no more Atari (and little use for user groups).

How long will it take before typical software pirates realize the damage they're doing by copying software? Thankfully, it didn't take me that long.

Ashamed as I am to admit it, I too have contributed to making Atari users the worst of any brand when it comes to illegally copying software. But now at least, I've stopped, and I'm writing this article to try to convince at least some of you to stop too. Maybe we could start a chain-reaction. It would be nice, but I don't have my hopes up about it.

The problem is that a lot of people are too stubborn to quit doing it. Or they're selfish about hoarding all the programs they can get their greedy hands on. Maybe they just don't grasp the amount of damage copying software does to the computer community. Typically, a software pirate may have a number of these attitudes. Sure, the good ole hacker ethic says that programs should be for public distribution, but it also says "keep computing alive at any cost." So much for the hacker ethic.

This is not only my opinion. Everywhere you look, you'll read the same thing, whether it be another person writing for another newsletter or for a computer magazine. Or you see it being written by someone like Matthew Ratcliff (a top public domain programmer for the Atari), a person whom I admire for his programming ability. The story's the same everywhere. I didn't just pull this out of a hat.

I plan on buying software for the rest of my days. Hopefully, you'll do the same. And if you can't afford it, then try looking to the wealth of public domain software. I just downloaded a program called GOSDUP. It's a DUP.SYS file that gives you a Graphics Operating System, sort of like GEM. It's simply great! Sometimes the public domain can be your BEST source of software. Currently the best terminal program available for the Atari is Express!, a public domain program. So are some excellent word processing, spreadsheet and game programs.

We are beginning to hear of programs that aren't being ported to the Atari because of piracy. If piracy doesn't stop soon there won't be any more new programs to copy. Then what will you do, buy another computer?

Let's stop piracy now, while we've got a chance.

♀Review

"OPERATION MARKET GARDEN"
by Strategic Simulations Inc.
$59.95 – 1 or 2 players
Reviewed by Jeff Bone

This game is based on the World War II campaign of the same name. The book and movie "A Bridge Too Far" was based on the infamous battle. It was supposed to ba an easy campaign. The plan was simple. In September 1944 there were three bridges between the Allied forces and German soil. But, to for each of the bridges individually would be time consuming and costly. And the Germans would surely blow-up any bridge which became jeopardized. Therefore General Montgomery devised a plan which capture all three bridges intact in one fatal swoop. An entire airborne division would be dropped at each of the bridges deep in enemy territory. Meanwhile, an armor spearhead would punch through the line and rush forward to relieve each of the airborne divisions and secure the bridges. The time-table was critical. Unfortunately, the plan was ill-fated. For outside the city of Arnhem, where the most important bridge was, lay almost two German tank divisions which were either ignored or undetected by intelligence sources. The rest is history...

First, I feel I must discuss the game packaging. This is one of the most attractive and professional games I have seen. The rule book is 8" by 11" printed on glossy stock in multi-colors. Several original historical drawings adorn the interior. The rules are concise and clear. A historical commentary is also provided. Designer notes and game play hints wrap-up the book. Also, there are two multi-colored laminatd maps which show the entire play area. On the reverse side are all the terrain, movement and combat tables which are the heart of the game. The front of the game box is attractive and the back-side contains ample text and graphics to let the buyer know what the game is about.

Upon booting the diskette, a game menu appears. Your first option is to play a new or saved game. Next, a level of diffuculty is chosen. Other choices are: historical or free set-up, advanced or intermediate rules, hidden or non-hidden enemy units, random or historical weather and number of players. That's just to get you started! A nice feature about this menu is that if you are loading a saved game the rest of the menu allows you to change the complexity of the game. This is an excellent play balance feature.

If you choose to play the computer you must be the Allies. But, this is O.K. since I feel the challenge lies with the Allies.

Next follows a series of phases too numerous and complex to cover in detail which complete one game turn. There are ten turns to the game. Some of the phases and rules cover a variety of events and options like the following: communications, supplies, units in travel or normal mode, offensive and defensive artillery, engineers, bridge demolition and building, unit efficiency and morale, unit build-up and break-down, unit disbanding and fortification and much more.

The text and graphics are also par excellence. The terrain is colorful and pleasant. Unit nationality and type are easily identifiable. And the balance between graphics and text is perfect. Some people don't enjoy text games, they want graphics. But, some of my favorite games are text. Regardless, this game will satisfy both groups.

This game is a real nail-biter from start to finish since the game's time-table is as critacal as the real battle. It's possible to take the majority of the contested area and still lose. Because, the emphasis is placed on the three bridges (i.e. victory points). I would not recommend this game to a military simulation beginner. I've played the game several times using the same conditions and none of the games were anything alike. Each time I was forced to deal with new and challenging situations. For the hard-core military simulation gamer this game is a must. In fact, this games only downfall is that will appeal to only avid war-gamers.

This game was designed in 1985. But, because it was ahead of it's time, it's still state of the art. It was designed by Dave Landrey and Chuck Kroegel. For my money, two of the best designers in the business.

On the software report card, I give this game an A.

So check your reserve chute and weapon. Make sure your static line is attached securely. Then, wait for the green jump light...

Geronimo!

Computer Consignments

looking for that special program?

Atari folks get their Programs
at CC's

ST ⌨ Tech

ST Random Disk Access in ST BASIC
by Brian Goluska

The program listed below (RAND_EX.BAS) shows a way to read a sequential disk file into a random disk file, and then access it from BASIC. For convenience, it assumes that a ramdisk named D: exists on the system.

Usage: Many BASIC programs have tables (arrays) of messages. If you code these into BASIC, you have to change the program whenever the messages change. If these message files exist outside the program, then they can be changed more easily than the code can be changed.

Two example files are also listed: WEAP.DAT and EVENT.DAT. Both are First Word files produced with WP Mode off. Or you can make your own using First Word. Keying records in using First Word is much, much easier than coding lines into BASIC. Be careful, however, with punctuation. You can't use commas, for instance, because BASIC will see a comma as a delimiter and break the record into 2 records unexpectedly. The record:

Space Gypsy Friends Wreck the Town, Your Share is $400

will be read by BASIC as:

Space Gypsy Friends Wreck the Town (Record 1)
Your Share is $400 (Record 2)

Other punctuation besides comma and carriage return can act as a delimiter. See the BASIC manual.

About the program:

Subroutine WTITLE simply makes a full screen blank window and does a lot of code to change the window's title.

Subroutine INFILES does the reading from drive A: into the ramdisk, and also maintains the record count for each file. Then a simple syntax checking picks either WEAP or EVENT to get the random result.

Comments: Each time a record is read from the ramdisk, it opens and closes the file. This

would be very wasteful if the ramdisk wasn't so quick. If the program were to be changed to read from a physical disk, this would have to be changed. Special care with the file numbers in the OPEN, FIELD, GET, INPUT, and CLOSE should also be used.

The sample file WEAP.DAT is a small version of a real application I use, making random weapons choices for adventure/arena gaming. The sample file EVENT.DAT is just for fun.

Program listing:

```
10 REM Demonstration Program for Random Disk
Access
12 gosub WTITLE:REM set up window
18 gosub INFILES:REM read the files to RAMDISK
20 ?"Enter W for weapon, E for events ala
M.U.L.E."
30 input in$
40 if in$="W" or in$ ="w" then gosub WEAP
42 if in$="E" or in$ ="e" then gosub EVENT
50 goto 20
100 end
200 WEAP: REM chooses random weapon
205 open "R",#3,"D:RWEAP.DAT",128
206 field #3, 128 as IN$
210 PICK% = int(WEAPINX*rnd(1))+1
220 get #3, PICK%
230 ?"PICK% IS ";PICK%;" GOT ";IN$
235 close #3
240 return
300 EVENT: REM chooses a random event
305 open "R",#3,"D:REVENT.DAT",128
306 field #3, 128 as IN$
310 PICK% = int(EVENTINX*rnd(1))+1
320 get #3, PICK%
330 ?"PICK% IS ";PICK%;" GOT ";IN$
335 close #3
340 return
900 INFILES:
910 open "R",#3,"D:RWEAP.DAT",128
920 field #3, 128 as OUT$
930 open "I",#2,"A:WEAP.DAT",128
940 on error goto 10000
950 LOOP: input #2, IN$
960 WEAPINX = WEAPINX + 1
970 IN$=IN$+SPACE$(128-LEN(IN$))
980 lset OUT$ = IN$
990 put #3,WEAPINX
1000 goto LOOP
1010 close #2:close #3
1220 open "R",#3,"D:REVENT.DAT",128
1230 field #3, 128 as OUT$
1240 open "I",#2,"A:EVENT.DAT",128
1250 on error goto 10210
1260 LOOP2: input #2, IN$
1270 EVENTINX = EVENTINX + 1
1280 IN$=IN$+SPACE$(128-LEN(IN$))
1290 lset OUT$ = IN$
1300 put #3,EVENTINX
1310 goto LOOP2
1320 close #2:close #3
1340 return:' end of INIT files
```

```
10000 ENDIN:
10005 'end of weap.dat
10010 if err = 62 then resume 1010
10205 'end of event.dat
10210 if err = 62 then resume 1320
20000 WTITLE:
20005 poke systab+24,1: ' turn window off
20007 randomize(0):fullw 2:clearw 2:gotoxy 0,0
20010 a#=gb: ' Fetch globals address
20020 gintin = peek(a#+8): ' AES int_in array
20030 poke gintin+0,peek(systab+8): ' OUTPUT
window handle
20040 poke gintin+2,2: ' we're changing its
name
20050 s# = gintin+4: ' DBL address for long
poke
20060 title$="Random Disk Access
Example"+chr$(0)
20065 poke s#,varptr(title$)
20070 gemsys(105)
20075 poke systab+24,0:' turn window on
20080 return

File WEAP.DAT:

Nothing
Knife
Club
Sword
Spear

File EVENT.DAT:

Acid Rain - Food Production up but Energy
Collectors Melt
Meteor Shower - Forty Meteors
Radiation - MULES Go Crazy - All MULES Stay and
Work
The Council for Agriculture Awards You 55 Cents
for Each Plot Not Farmed
Sunspots - Energy Production Up but Oil Prices
Fall
Fire in the Store! All Insurance Premiums Up
1000%
You caught a MOUNTAIN Wumpus!
A MOUNTAIN Wumpus is easy.  Try Catching a
SWAMP Wumpus.
Do-Gooders Return All Chrystite
Do-Gooders Return All Chrystite (they can show
up twice)
Earthquake North and South
Earthquake East and West Moves Mountains
MULE Runs Away Because Serial Number was not
Recorded
Bad News - You Get Sued by a Distant Relative
for a Vast Fortune
Your Gypsy Friends Wreck the Town - You Get
$400 as Your Cut
```

VIEWPOINT

A FEW WORDS...
By Leo Sell

Recently, while reviewing the local Commodore
club Newsletter, I became aware of a very
disturbing problem that their club was dealing
with. It seems that Commodore, in order to
recognize the group as an "official" user
group, REQUIRES the names and addresses of the
active members to be sent to the corporate
offices. The penalty for failure to comply is
termination as a "authorized/recognized" user
group. I find this to be highly offensive and
am writing this to fight the precedent, and to
make people aware of the problem so that it
will not spread to other brand computer user
groups.

The idea of invading our privacy in such a way
is unfathomable. The only reason a company
could have for doing such a thing is to easily
build a mailing list for use or sale.

Now, I don't mind staying informed through junk
mail as well as other sources. But if you want
to use or sell my name and address, please be
gracious enough to ASK. Don't intimidate,
strong-arm, or force it out of me. Then you
are violating my dignity, if not my rights.

It seems to me that this sort of action is a
very real invasion of privacy. Furthermore, to
me it is highly unethical. A REQUEST for such
information is one thing, but making the
information a requirement of being listed as an
"official" user group is out and out blackmail.
Computer companies and their corresponding user
groups need one another. They can support and
build each other up in mutually beneficial
ways. But, there must be a lot of trust in the
relationship. A demand like this violates the
that trust.

Atari Corporation, please be on notice. DO NOT
ever put Atari user groups in this kind of
position. Commodore may have set a precedent
with this action, but please don't follow it.
It is a very disquieting development,
potentially extremely damaging to user group
relations. We do not ever want to make this
kind of decision, so please do not require it
of us. Instead, let's continue to do all we
can TOGETHER to promote Atari computing.

♪ COMPUTER MUSIC

MIDITALK
By Mitchell Wells

The most common question I'm asked about in relation to MIDI (Musical Instrument Ditital Interface) is what specifically it does. The most common MISCONCEPTION about MIDI in this respect is that MIDI somehow digitizes sound. This brief article will explain simply what MIDI really does and also how I use MIDI to make music with my ATARI computer.

Probably everyone is fimilar with a player piano. A player piano has a roll of paper that, through the punching of holes in this roll, records the notes played by a pianist so this sequence of notes can be played back by the piano without the pianist. At least, the first player pianos did this. Later, the Duo Art piano was introduced which would not only record the notes played, but also the velocity and exact duration of the notes, capturing the exact performance of the pianist. This was all but forgotten with the advent of record and tape. But tape has many problems, one of which is once you record it, it's done. There is no good (read: easy) way to edit a live performance on tape. MIDI to some extent solves these problems. It works in much the way the Duo Art player piano does, recording the notes played (not digitizing sound), their duration and velocity, and the use of various controlers (pitch bend, modulation wheel, program change) found on synthesizers. But instead of punching holes in a roll of paper to record this information, MIDI allows for a computer to store this information, which enables editing of the recorded information in much the way a letter is edited using a word processor. MIDI on most computer systems also allows the layering of this recorded information, enabling the computer to play many synthesizers at once and synchronize them. Other items, like drum machines and echo machines, can also be synchronized with this recorded information. Two things make MIDI useful to any musician (or non-musician): the opportunity to easily edit the information recorded, and the recording of many tracks (layers) of information without the loss in sound that occurs when tape is used. Every time the computer plays out the song recorded, it plays the original instruments the song was recorded on, just like the player piano. MIDI also allows for the transfer of other data to synthesizers, like sound settings, volume settings, tempo, etc..

My system consists of an ATARI 800XL that has been upgraded to 256K, an 810 disk drive, a MIDI interface (like the one offered by HYBRID ARTS in California) and software (HYBRID ARTS' MIDITRACK III) on the computer side. With this computer system I run 4 synthesizers (Yamaha TX7, Yamaha CX5M w/SFG-05, Casio CZ101, Korg Poly 800), 3 drum machines (Casio RZ1, Korg DDM 110 and 220), and an echo (Korg SDD2000). I record a song by first playing the synthesizers and drum machines, and recording them in tracks using the ATARI computer via MIDI. The computer then plays back all these keyboards and drums, and I mix this onto one track of a 4 track tape recorder, which leaves me 3 tracks to put on live guitar, bass and vocals. Then finally, I mix these four tracks onto a regular stereo cassette and the creative process is finished. Although most larger studios have much more equipment and many more tracks on tape available to them, the recording process using MIDI and tape is essentially the same.

Next month I'll tell you what you need to start your own MIDI studio on an ATARI and how much it costs (it's so cheap to get started, you just won't believe it). I'll also tell you some specifics on the software available.

"Think back... which keys did you press?"
(reprinted from LAACE, July 1986)

Last Hacks

PROGRAM ERRORS DUE TO PARASTATIC CONDUCTANCE
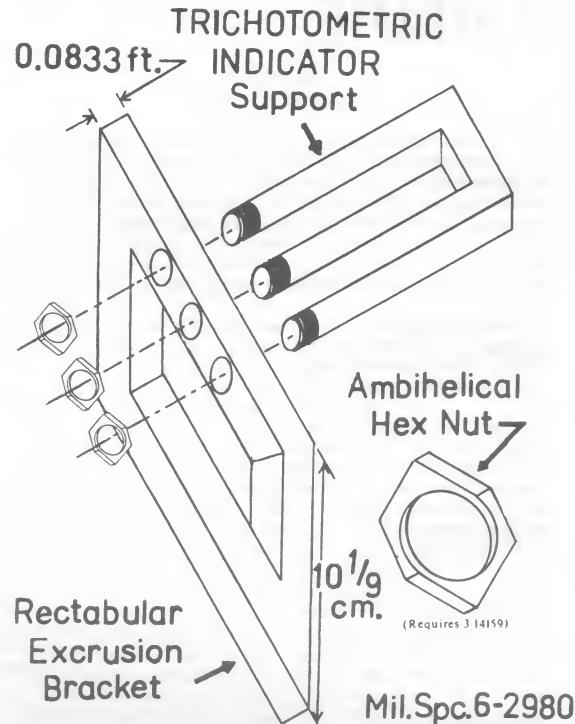Contributed By Buzz Kelley
REPRINTED FROM M.A.C.C.

Extensive research underway at the AMES
research facility home office has determined
that a large percentage of microcomputer
systems programming errors are being caused by
parastatic conductance which results from
differential spurving of the hydroscopic
marselvanes located in the prefabulated amilite
base of the unilateral detractor mechanisms of
many microcomputer models now in production.

AMES researchers have been unable to offer any
remedy for this troublesome situation other
than to recommend manestically spacing the
grouting brushes on the periphery of the
nubbing purwell. Although on the surface this
would appear to alleviate the problems
currently being experienced by many owners and
operators of the microcomputer systems, we have
found that this treatment actually leads to
further complications in causing the
regurgitive wennel sprocket to transmit
microgriffage to the anhydrous dangling pin,
from whence it is modulated, amplified and
splitnagled, and thus causing transcendental
hopper dadoscope failure. This in turn causes
quasipiestic depleneration of the bitumogenous
sprandels, leading to an excessively high level
RMP (0.0876 PPQ/M) peak nivel-sheave voltage
(per our observations under laboratory
conditions using promulgenisis varianatistical
method) which further magnifies the amnesial
slump found in the rear of most units.

It is apparent that any successful solution
absolutely be based on the regenerative
low-ohmic nofers combined with a high degree of
medial interation of magno-reluctance and
resistance to atmospherical rillarah within
non-conductive capacitative impedances. Our
senior technicians have discovered a
conclusive, yet simple and effective remedy
which involves a mere modification of the
spiral decommutator by the installation of a
rectabular bracket and the adjoining
bioptumalmaltrichotometric indicator support
(see attachment for precise location on most
mod V)s). These items should be purchased
(from petty cash) from a local electronic
supply house and installed immediately.

It is the opinion of our technicians that these
remedial installations should be within the
scope of the average users realm, and that
bringing your computer to a service facility
for adjustment may not be necessary. Upon

installation, the above cited malfunctions
should be reduced significantly and you should
experience greatly increased non-reversible
tremic amifacience.

TRICHOTOMETRIC
INDICATOR
Support

0.0833 ft.

Ambihelical
Hex Nut

$10\frac{1}{9}$ cm.

(Requires 3 14159)

Rectabular
Excrusion
Bracket

Mil.Spc.6-2980

Note: The special ambihelical hexnut is unique
in that attempts to remove it in a conventional
manner only succeeds in tightening it. Because
of this design feature, the nut must be fully
screwed on before it can be screwed off.
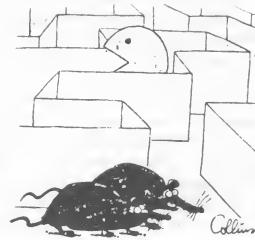
"Wait a minute... Did you hear something?"

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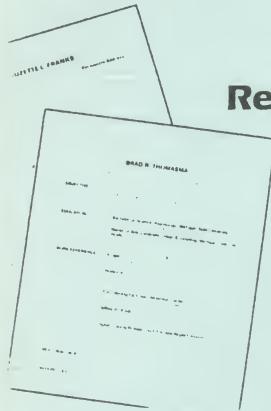
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